

Application No. 09/909,488
Amendment and Response
January 24, 2006

Patent
Attorney Docket: 33449.8029.US00

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 to 30 (cancelled).

31. (previously presented) A method for softening water, the method comprising:
providing a source of potable water;
providing at least one nanofiltration filter element in fluid communication with the source of potable water, the nanofiltration filter element configured to reject at least 80 percent of calcium ions from potable water;
receiving from the source of potable water an input flow of potable water having at least 2 grains of hardness per gallon;
discharging a first output flow of permeate water comprising at least 80 percent of the input flow, and which has passed through the nanofiltration filter; and
discharging a second output flow of non-permeate water comprising less than 20 percent of the input flow, and which has not passed through the nanofiltration filter; wherein the output flow of permeate water has a lower hardness than the output flow of non-permeate water.
32. (original) The method for softening water of claim 31, wherein the nanofiltration filter element has an average pore size that substantially permits the passage of water and monovalent ions but substantially prevents the passage of divalent ions.

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33. (currently amended) The method for softening water in accordance with claim 31, wherein the method does not substantially increase the total salt levels relative to the input flow of water.
34. (original) The method for softening water in accordance with claim 31, wherein the input flow is provided at a pressure of less than 200 pounds per square inch.
35. (original) The method for softening water in accordance with claim 31, wherein the input flow is provided at a pressure of 140 to 200 pounds per square inch.
36. (cancelled)
37. (original) The method for softening water in accordance with claim 31, wherein the output flow of permeate water contains greater than 90 percent of the input flow.
38. (currently amended) The method for softening water in accordance with claim 31, wherein the output flow of permeate water has a hardness below ~~[[3.5]]~~ 2 grains per gallon.
39. (original) The method for softening water in accordance with claim 31, wherein the method is configured and arranged to have an output stream of permeate water of 200 gallons or more per 24 hour period.
40. (cancelled)